

Reactions from the public on September 23, 2008

Hutchinson, Kansas

Reported by Julius Karash

Dave Kerr, president of the Hutchinson/Reno County Chamber of Commerce – “We are having good success in growing our industrial community here, and we need those highways to service that.”

Don Linville, T-LINK member from Garden City – “The real issue is how do we pay for it? I’m still looking for that lightning flash when somebody in the audience says, ‘How about this?’”

Ed DeSoignie, T-LINK member from Kansas City - “If you look for the perfect time to do these things, it doesn’t happen.”

Howard Partington, Great Bend city administrator – “Maintaining what we have is the most important thing. If we don’t maintain what we have we’ll go backwards, and that’s a real economic problem. We have to preserve, maintain and try to enhance what we have. Then we can look at some of the bigger projects.”

Jan Peters, president and CEO of the Great Bend Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development – “Right now we’re sitting on the cusp of great oil and agricultural production. Our economy is looking great. Tourism will play a role. We need good upkeep on the highways we do have, and then hopefully, piece by piece, we’ll get that Northwest Passage.”

Mark Treaster, Kansas representative from Pretty Prairie – “Flexibility is a good thing. You don’t know what the conditions are going to be 10 years from now. We’re in a down economy. If we limit ourselves to just what we see available today we might be shortchanging what we can do in future years.”

Mickey Fornaro-Dean, executive director of the Harvey County Economic Development Council – “It’s a multimodal opportunity for us. We have a strong airport. We’ve got a lot of rail opportunities. If we upgrade the road system too, that’s going to be kind of a trifecta there.”

Tim Rogers of Salina, T-LINK co-chair – “Without a plan, without a blueprint on how to take care of transportation needs in our state, we won’t be able to take advantage of good economic times when they come.”

Warren Porter, Winfield City Manager – “Highways alone don’t make for economic development. It takes community commitment.”

Willis Heck, Newton City Commissioner – “I think it’s been a very good process. I think KDOT should be commended for getting out into the state and gathering information.”